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ABSTRACT

Every two years Douglas College, British Columbia, gives a series of short questionnaires to students registering during the fall semester. The questions cover student demographics and topics, such as educational goals, perceptions of Douglas College, and previous education. This 2002 survey received a total of 4,100 scannable responses from 9,800 students, for a 42% response rate. There were 12 different versions of the survey, each of which had a response size of approximately 350. The study was divided into different questionnaires in order to allow posing an extensive set of questions without overburdening any individual respondent. The disadvantages of an 8% sample include less precise data and sample sizes which are too small to permit disaggregation by program of study. Questions common to all questionnaires indicate that students are 63% female, 41% are 20-24 years old, 30% are taking three courses, and the field of study for 23% is in the Arts. The questions particular to individual questionnaires include, among others, the following categories: (1) Perceptions of Douglas College; (2) Reasons for Choosing Douglas College; (3) Financial Resources; (4) Multiculturalism; (5) Course Delivery; (6) Equity Group Membership; (7) Registration Success; and (8) Computer Usage. (NB)

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Summary:

Student Profile and Perceptions Survey

Fall 2002

ED 481 945

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Institutional Research
Douglas College
October 2002

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2002 Student Profile and Perceptions Survey
Introduction

Survey Description

Every two years since 1990, students registering at Douglas College in the fall semester have been given one of a series of short questionnaires to complete. Each questionnaire has half a dozen questions in common of a demographic nature, followed by differing sets of questions on such topics as educational goals, perceptions of Douglas College and previous education.

By dividing the study into twelve questionnaires, an extensive set of questions can be posed without burdening any individual respondent. The disadvantages of an eight percent sample for each questionnaire include less precise data and sample sizes which are too small to permit disaggregation by program of study.

Methodology

The 1900 and 1992 versions of the survey were conducted during in-person registration at Douglas College (and hence the survey was known as the Fall Registration survey.) Response rates for these years were approximately 75 – 80%, generating more than 500 completed responses for each questionnaire. In 1994, with the introduction of telephone registration, the questionnaire was distributed to students as they went to obtain a new library card, or to renew an old card.

The method used since 1994 relies heavily on the support of personnel in the Library and Distributed Learning Services, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Not every student validates their library card at the beginning of semester, students and staff are often busy, and a number of other factors limit the number of responses received. The response rate is generally in the 40 percent range, considerably lower than when the survey began but still sufficient to generate the 300 responses needed for an adequate sample size for any given question.

The format of the 2000 version of the survey changed so that the completed questionnaires could be scanned, replacing manual data entry with survey software. The "scan bubbles" questionnaires were created with software that permits custom questions to be printed in a variety of formats on blank paper, but which nevertheless places limitations how questions can be posed. Thus some questions had to be posed differently in 2000 and 2002 than in the past. Also, some questions were added or changed as part of the normal updating of each version of the survey.

Response Rate and Data Reliability

A total of 4,100 scannable questionnaires were received from the 9,800 students registered at Douglas College in Fall 2002, making for a 42 percent response rate. Each of the twelve versions of the questionnaire had about 350 responses. (However, scanner problems meant that two dozen responses to Questionnaire H, Multiculturalism, could not be included.)

The accuracy of a sample size of 350 can be easily seen by comparing responses to the common demographic questions that appear on all versions of the questionnaire: the results to the same question sometimes vary by a couple of percentage points, while they are almost identical in other instances. This indicates that the pattern of survey completion was indeed fairly random.

Comparisons of the 2002 results with those from past years show fairly smooth trends, rather than large fluctuations. This is further confirmation that the results are reasonably reliable.

In short, the results of this survey are fairly dependable but only accurate to within two or three percentage points. For example, the survey suggests 88% of Douglas students have an Internet connection at home, but the true number could well be as low as 85% or as high as 91%. The survey results thus should be viewed as a "broad brush" portrait of the student body, not as absolutely precise.

Demographics of Respondents

Questions common to all twelve questionnaires.
4,091 responses

Broad field of study:

23%	Arts
19%	Commerce & Business Administration (23% in 2000)
15%	Science
10%	Health Science
9%	Criminology
6%	Child, Family & Community Studies
5%	English as a Second Language
4%	Office Administration
4%	Performing Arts
5%	Developmental Studies
0%	Other

Gender:

63%	Female

Age:

36%	15 - 19 years
41%	20 - 24 years
23%	25 years and older

Number of previous semesters at Douglas College:

43%	Zero (35% in 2000)
12%	One
15%	Two
30%	Three or more (34% in 2000)

Number of courses this semester:

12%	One
15%	Two
30%	Three
26%	Four
13%	Five
4%	Six or more

Which campus student is attending this semester: (choose all that apply)

80%	New Westminster
51%	David Lam (47% in 2000)
5%	Thomas Haney

Part A: Sources of Information About the College

350 responses

Percentage of students rating each of the following as either "Essential" or "Important":

83% Douglas College web site (45% in 2000)

72% College calendar

64% College instructors
62% Registrar's Office/Admissions Office

59% College advisors/counselors (55% in 2000)

44% Past/current Douglas students (47% in 2000)
43% Family
43% Friends (not Douglas students) (37% in 2000)
40% High school counsellors or teachers (36% in 2000)

20% Your employer
21% Other

Difficulty getting sufficient information about Douglas College:

6% Difficult (3% in 2000)
33% Occasionally difficult

Percentage of students rating each of the following as either "Entirely" or "Mainly":

89% College Web site is clear and helpful (65% in 2000)
88% Printed information was helpful and easy to understand
87% Accuracy of printed information
86% College Employees were friendly and helpful when giving you information
77% Accuracy of oral information from College employees
77% Sufficient printed information (74% in 2000))

Preferred method for receiving information (new question):

33% Web site
25% Email
21% In-person
11% Telephone
10% Print

Part B: Perceptions of Douglas College

351 responses

Percentage of students rating each of the following as "High"
(other response options were Average, Low, and Don't Know):

High	
58%	Diversity of students
45%	Helpfulness of employees (48% in 2000)
45%	Accessibility for mature students
43%	Quality of your program (40% in 2000)
34%	Reputation of Douglas College
34%	Quality of campus life (29% in 2000)
34%	Sensitivity to student's needs (29% in 2000)
32%	Commitment to excellence (35% in 2000)
32%	Overall quality of all programs (27% in 2000)
31%	Preparation for study at university
31%	Help to students in setting goals
31%	Range of courses offered
27%	Quality of physical facilities (23% in 2000)
23%	Preparation for getting a good job (32% in 2000)
22%	Quality of graduates
21%	Admission requirements to your program
18%	Ease of registering in courses
17%	Caliber of student in your program (23% in 2000)

Part C: Reasons for Choosing Douglas College

356 responses

Douglas College as first choice of institution:

68% First choice (72% in 2000)

Percentage of respondents saying reason was "highly" important:

55% Courses/programs offered (50% in 2000)
52% Location (57% in 2000)
52% Quality of instruction (46% in 2000)

41% Reputation (35% in 2000)

37% Personalized instruction (32% in 2000)
34% "Open door" admissions philosophy (30% in 2000)
34% Cost (29% in 2000)
34% Helpful Douglas employees (23% in 2000)
32% Day and/or time when courses are offered (35% in 2000)

26% Size of campus (22% in 2000)
26% Buildings and facilities (19% in 2000)

19% Advice from friends (13% in 2000)
16% Advice from educators
16% Diverse or multicultural student body (12% in 2000)
14% Advice from family
14% Campus life, e.g. sports

10% Advertisements (6% in 2000)
10% Other
8% Not admitted elsewhere (11% in 2000)

Part D: Previous Education

354 responses

Highest level of education prior to entering Douglas College:

3%	Some high school
59%	High school graduation (65% in 2000)
15%	One year post-secondary (12% in 2000)
4%	Two years post-secondary (3% in 2000)
4%	Three or more years post-secondary
7%	University degree (3% in 2000)
3%	Other

Enjoyment of most recent education prior to Douglas:

81%	Positive experiences (73% in 2000)
14%	Neutral (19% in 2000)
5%	Negative experiences (9% in 2000)

Success in most recent education prior to Douglas:

64%	Very or moderately successful
30%	Average
6%	Somewhat or very unsuccessful

Relation of prior education to current studies:

28%	Closely related (25% in 2000)
43%	Somewhat related (46% in 2000)
28%	Unrelated

Highest level of education attained by either parent:

11%	Some high school
24%	High school graduation
19%	Some post-secondary (27% in 2000)
38%	University degree (32% in 2000)
8%	Other

Attendance at other institutions (past or present):

6%	SFU
7%	BCIT (11% in 2000)
2%	UBC
22%	Another BC College (17% in 2000)
7%	Another BC University
19%	Other post-secondary institution (22% in 2000)

Last secondary school district attended:

24%	Coquitlam
13%	Burnaby
5%	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows (9% in 2000)
4%	New Westminster
12%	Surrey
10%	Vancouver
1%	Delta (4% in 2000)
8%	Other Lower Mainland
7%	Other BC
4%	Other Canada (7% in 2000)
12%	International

Part E: Educational Goals

345 responses

Percentage of students claiming each of the following reasons for continuing their education was highly important (other options were Average, Low, or Irrelevant):

High

63% To get credits and/or a diploma (69% in 2000)
61% Transfer to another institution (66% in 2000)
66% Prepare for a new or first career

53% Personal interest in certain subjects (57% in 2000)
58% Personal intellectual development

47% Complete a full program at Douglas
45% To gain confidence (41% in 2000)

36% Get a job right after leaving Douglas (39% in 2000)
33% To experience student life (28% in 2000)
31% To decide what subjects to study

28% Upgrade existing job skills
26% Funding/financial aid available (21% in 2000)

18% To take only a few specific courses (23% in 2000)
17% To meet family expectations
11% Could not find a suitable job

Note: Actual reasons and the reasons students perceive or claim are not necessarily identical.

How employed students perceive themselves:

75% A student who happens to be working (79% in 2000)
25% A worker who happens to be studying (21% in 2000)

Part F: Demographic Profile of Students

349 responses

Permanent address:

20%	Burnaby
12%	New Westminster
27%	Coquitlam (Tri Cities) (32% in 2000)
7%	Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows
12%	Surrey
3%	Delta
11%	Vancouver
5%	Other Lower Mainland
1%	Outside Lower Mainland

Address in 1997 (5 years ago):

72%	Lower Mainland (69% in 2000)
8%	Other BC
5%	Outside BC
15%	Outside Canada (11% in 2000)

Main form of transportation to Douglas College:

46%	I drive
3%	Ride in family car
2%	Ride in someone else's car
26%	Skytrain (15% in 2000)
15%	Bus
7%	Walk
1%	Bicycle and other

Travel time (one way):

59%	Less than 30 minutes
33%	30 – 60 minutes
8%	More than 1 hour

Closest campus to where you live:

61%	Douglas College (64% in 2000)
15%	Kwantlen (11% in 2000)
10%	SFU (Burnaby)
5%	BCIT (8% in 2000)
4%	Langara
3%	VCC
2%	Other

Accommodation:

58%	Parent's home
22%	My own place (perhaps with spouse)
12%	Shared dwelling
9%	Other

Monthly rental/cost of housing:

41%	$0 - $99
24%	$100 - $499
14%	$500 - $699
20%	$700 or more

Gross income for 2002 (optional question):

44%	Under $5,000 (51% in 2000)
24%	$ 5 - 10,000 (21% in 2000)
16%	$10 - 15,000 (15% in 2000)
16%	$15,000 and over (13% in 2000)

Your family's gross income (optional question):

14%	Under $20,000
11%	$20 - 40,000
11%	$41 - 60,000
8%	$61 - 80,000
13%	$81,000 and over
43%	Don't know

Part G: Financial Resources

347 responses

Apply for a student loan or borrow money for the current semester:

21% Yes

Debts from previous loans:

83% None
7% Under $5,000
10% Over $5,000

Plan to obtain paid employment this semester:

35% None (43% in 2000)
49% Up to 20 hours per week (44% in 2000)
16% 21 or more hours per week (13% in 2000)

Sources of income during semester:

Source	Main Source	Second Source
Savings	13%	26%
Part-time job	37%	23%
Full-time job	10%	1%
Spouse	3%	2%
Parents	26%	31%
Other	12%	17%

Relocated to attend Douglas:

8% By choice
4% By necessity

Finances a problem this semester:

10% Big problem (7% in 2000)
28% Small problem
31% Not really
32% Not at all

Children living at home (one or two parent family):

10% Yes

Single parent: 4% Yes (7% in 2000)

Financial dependants (other than children living at home):

6% Yes

Sacrifices in regular job in order to attend Douglas:

8% Yes, extensive
37% Yes, somewhat (34% in 2000)

Part H: Multiculturalism

324 responses

Childhood languages other than English(choose only one):

47%	None (52% in 2000)
14%	Chinese (18% in 2000)
12%	Other Asian (6% in 2000)
10%	Punjabi/Hindi (5% in 2000)
8%	French
5%	Other European
5%	Middle Eastern

Ethnic background:

34%	English (43% in 2000)
27%	Asia Pacific
15%	Other European
10%	East Indian/South Asian (7% in 2000)
6%	Middle Eastern
8%	Other

Occasionally speak another language at home:

35%	Yes, by choice (32% in 2000)
14%	Yes, by necessity (11% in 2000)

Lived in another country for over a year as a child:

33%	Yes

Lived in another country for over a year as an adult:

18%	Yes (21% in 2000)

Difficulty with spoken English:

12%	Occasionally
2%	Often

Feel distinct because of your cultural background:

22%	Occasionally
7%	Often
1%	Constantly

Experience difficulty understanding Canadian culture:

12%	Occasionally
2%	Often

Part I: Registration Success

351 responses

Number of courses wanted and obtained:

Number of Courses	Wanted	Obtained
One	7%	13%
Two	11%	17%
Three	32%	33%
Four	31%	22%
Five	15%	10%
Six or more	4%	4%

Number of courses missed because all sections were full:

41% None (48% in 2000)
34% One (26% in 2000)
14% Two (9% in 2000)
7% Three (10% in 2000)
2% Four
3% Five or more

Number of courses missed because of timetable conflicts or other commitments:

45% None (58% in 2000)
39% One (28% in 2000)
11% Two (6% in 2000)
3% Three (3% in 2000)
1% Four
2% Five or more

Number of courses taken mainly because space available and fit timetable:

40% None (47% in 2000)
31% One (22% in 2000)
14% Two
8% Three
3% Four
3% Five or more

Taking courses elsewhere this semester:

19% Yes

Satisfaction with course selection (recognizing College lacks resources to guarantee sufficient spaces):

22% Very satisfied (26% in 2000)
44% Satisfied (40% in 2000)
25% Neutral (20% in 2000)
8% Dissatisfied
1% Very dissatisfied (5% in 2000)

Part J: Course Delivery

353 responses

Percentage saying the following course times were very convenient:

- 54% Daytime during the week (47% in 2000)
- 36% Evenings, Monday to Friday (24% in 2000)
- 21% Friday evenings (12% in 2000)
- 17% Saturdays (13% in 2000)

- 31% Summer (20% in 2000)

- 21% Compressed format (fewer weeks, more hours per week) (13% in 2000)

Shift work causes problems for course attendance:

- 16% Yes, often
- 47% Occasionally
- 37% Never

Appeal of unconventional ways of offering courses:

- 17% Yes, definitely
- 33% Yes, but only in some situations
- 28% Don't know, but would like to find out (38% in 2000)
- 7% Don't know, but suspect not
- 12% No, generally prefer usual methods (4% in 2000)
- 3% Definitely not

Preference for the college to offer fewer courses in order to offer more sections of each course:

- 23% Yes (27% in 2000)
- 23% Indifferent

Put more time and money into developing different ways of offering courses:

- 26% Definitely (35% in 2000)
- 59% Perhaps (48% in 2000)
- 6% Probably not
- 4% No
- 5% Don't know

Internet activity desired in Douglas courses:

- 4% None
- 15% Minimal
- 51% Some
- 23% Much
- 7% Don't know

Part K: Equity Group Membership

357 responses

First Nations/Aboriginal:

4% Yes

Visible minority:

23% Yes, definitely

Have a disability:

10% Physical impairment (e.g. visual, mobility, hearing, dexterity)
6% Learning or other cognitive impairment (e.g. dyslexia, head injury)
4% Other disability

Severity of impairment or disability:

9% Minor
3% Medium or major (accommodation needed at college)

Have received money from employment insurance in the past year:

5% Yes

Have received income assistance ("welfare") in the past year:

4% Yes

Part L: Computer Usage

352 responses

Level of knowledge about computers:

3%	None
40%	Beginner (47% in 2000)
57%	Intermediate or higher(51% in 2000)

Level of interest in computers:

7%	Uninterested
61%	Mildly interested
32%	Quite interested (37% in 2000)

Have computer at home:

5%	No (10% in 2000)
36%	Yes, Pentium: 1Ghz or higher
29%	Yes, Pentium: 600 Mhz – 1Ghz
9%	Yes, older PC
5%	Yes, Mac
15%	Yes, Other

Have a laptop: (new question)

17%	Yes, own
4%	Yes, access other

Type of Internet connection:

12%	None
56%	Cable
36%	Telephone (dial up or ADSL)

Computer usage in a typical week:

3%	0 hours (6% in 2000)
47%	1 - 5 hours (50% in 2000)
39%	6 - 20 hours (36% in 2000)
11%	21 or more hours (8% in 2000)

Check email account: (new question)

9%	Don't have account
55%	Daily
27%	Every few days
9%	Once a week or less

Location of computer use in the past year:

95%	In my home (89% in 2000)
69%	In another home (62% in 2000)
59%	At Douglas College
51%	At work
50%	At high school
48%	At a library or community centre
30%	Elsewhere
23%	At Internet cafe

Have taken a course about computers:

43%	No
26%	Yes, up to 10 hours
31%	Yes, 10 or more hours (35% in 2000)

Have taken a course that used computers extensively to teach about other subjects:

64%	No
30%	Yes, 1 or 2 courses
6%	Yes, 3 or more courses

Have taken a course in which students used e-mail with each other or the instructor:

50%	No (60% in 2000)
39%	Yes, 1 or 2 courses (33% in 2000)
10%	Yes, 3 or more courses (7% in 2000)

Number of courses that have been completed at Douglas College that involved using a computer:

37%	Not applicable (new student)
25%	None
21%	One or two (18% in 2000)
17%	Three or more

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